

Public Opinion in Aiken County: Health Care Reform and the Fate of Governor Sanford

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The observations and conclusions in this report are those of the principle author and do not represent the University of South Carolina in any way.

Introduction

Each fall students in Dr. Robert Botsch's Political Science Research Methods class at USC Aiken perform a survey as part of their course experience. This year the survey was a telephone survey of a representative sample of 400 adults in Aiken County. These surveys have been performed annually since the 1980s.

The 2009 survey consisted of 48 questions focusing mainly on health care and the proposed health care reforms, but it also included of a couple of questions about the fate of embattled Governor Sanford. We also asked respondents about basic political orientations, identifications, and demographic information. Students authored the first draft of each section in this report and will be writing detailed research reports in the weeks to come seeking to explain interrelationships among these questions. This report highlights some of the subject areas that might be of greatest interest to local citizens.

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Methodology

The population for this survey was all adults (at least 18 year of age) in Aiken County who have telephones in their homes and who were at home when called. The interviews were conducted over a five-week period between October 11 and November 15, 2009. The sample was selected so that all parts of the Aiken County would be included in the proper proportions. Numbers were randomly generated using a sampling technique called "systematic sampling plus one." This involves selecting numbers in set intervals from the July 2010 edition of the *AT&T Telephone Book* beginning at a random point on the first page and then adding one to each number selected. This technique was used so that even those with unlisted phone numbers would be included in the sample. In order to maximize the chance of contacting people who were rarely at home, each number was called at least four times at different hours and on different days of the week before it was replaced with a new number. At each residence we reached, we asked to speak to the individual who had the "most recent birthday" so as to randomly select respondents within the household. Interviewing only the person who happens to answer the phone would not provide a representative sample of all adults in Aiken County. After the survey was completed, the sample

was statistically adjusted to match the actual distribution of adult age groups in the county so as to make the sample more representative.

The response rate was just over 54%, which is acceptable for telephone surveys. What this means is that for every 10 individuals contacted, a little more than half of those individuals completed the interview. This is typical of the response rates for telephone surveys done today.

Because the procedures used to produce the sample approximates a random sample of all residents, we can estimate the sampling error for any given question. The sampling error on any question that includes all 400 people in the sample is no more than 5 percentage points in either direction. As the sample gets smaller, the sampling error increases. For example, on questions that have 150 responses the sampling error is + or - 8%. A one in twenty chance exists that the error can be larger than the sampling error for any given question.

Note in reading the tables that percentages do not always add to 100% because of rounding to the nearest whole percentage point. Because of the statistical adjustment for age, some questions show a total of 401 respondents.

The survey was conducted by USCA students who were trained in survey research techniques by Dr. Robert E. Botsch. They worked under the direction of Mr. Patrick Long. He was assisted by Ms. Christy Hightower, a former USCA student who has participated in previous studies performed at the lab. Kiri Dunlap provided editorial assistance on this report. The students who were involved in the survey were Ben Cook, Kiri Dunlap, Joe Fletcher, Traci Flowers, Nicole Ford, Ryan Kuhns, Alex Peake, Brittany Robbins, Logan Sharpe, Brooks Shealy, and Roosevelt Shuler.

Findings

Satisfaction with Current Health Care System

The first question we asked respondents focused on their overall evaluations of the health care system in the United States.

QUESTION: *How would you describe the current health care system in the U.S.?*

Badly broken	34%	(137)
Okay	49%	(197)
Good	16%	(64)
Not sure/don't know	1%	(2)

The two most frequent answers were “ok” and “badly broken.” Almost half of the residents (49%) believe the system is “ok,” and a little more than a third (34%) believe the system is “badly broken.” Only 16% believe that the system is “good,” and 2% were unsure.

Opinions in Aiken County are similar to those in a national CBS poll performed in early October. In that survey about half (53%) saw some need for change and about a third (31%) called for completely rebuilding the nation’s health care system, and 15% rated the system as working pretty well.

Opinions in Aiken County break down along party lines. Republicans were the least likely to see the system as completely broken and most likely to rate it as good. Democrats were far more critical of the current system than Republicans. Interestingly, political independents were the most likely to see the system as completely broken. Nearly half of them saw the system as broken.

	<u>DEMOCRATS</u>	<u>INDEPENDENTS</u>	<u>REPUBLICANS</u>
Badly Broken	39%	47%	25%
OK	53%	34%	53%
Good	<u>8%</u>	<u>19%</u>	<u>22%</u>
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%

Single-Payer System or More Market Based Approach

In the current debate over health care reform, two polar opposing views have been at war with each other—whether any reforms should take a market based approach or should focus on what is called a single-payer system that

places government at the center. Although current proposals being considered by Congress attempt to have some of both, these two alternatives have framed much of the debate. So we asked Aiken County residents which they would prefer.

QUESTION: *Some people say any problems our health care system has can be fixed with a little regulation and more competition in the free market while others say that we should have a single-payer system funded by tax money. Which do you think would be better? Regulation and competition or a single-payer system?*

Regulation and competition	64% (257)
Single payer system	26% (103)
Not sure/don't know	10% (41)

Residents prefer a market based approach of “a little more regulation and more competition” by more than a two to one ratio. Almost two thirds of all residents choose the more market-based approach and only a fourth opt for a single-payer system.

Nationally the difference of opinion is far closer. A *Time Magazine* survey from this past summer showed the nation about evenly divided on this question with a slight edge toward the single-payer approach.

Just as we saw in overall assessment of the American health care system, opinions on this question break down along party lines.

	<u>DEMOCRATS</u>	<u>INDEPENDENTS</u>	<u>REPUBLICANS</u>
Reg & Comp	58%	52%	75%
Single-Payer	35%	32%	16%
Not Sure	<u>7%</u>	<u>16%</u>	<u>9%</u>
Total	100%	100%	100%

While all partisan groups tend to favor the more market based approach, Republicans were by far the strongest in this preference. When we broke these preferences down by ideology, not even self-identified liberals preferred the single-payer system over the more market based approach. Clearly Aiken County residents of nearly all political stripes like competition and a little regulation.

Evaluation of Medicare

Medicare is the largest government run medical insurance program in the nation. We asked Aiken County residents how they evaluate this program.

QUESTION: *People have different opinions about Medicare. How do you feel about Medicare as a program?*

Bad	10%	(39)
Fair	48%	(194)
Good	32%	(128)
Excellent	6%	(23)
Not sure/don't know	4%	(16)

The majority of Aiken County residents felt that the program is “fair” to “good,” with 48%, almost half, of our respondents selecting the “fair” answer and another third selecting the answer of “good.” Only about one in ten rated the program as “bad.” At the other extreme, a little more than one in twenty rated it as “excellent.”

Age and familiarity with the program made a difference in opinion on Medicare. Those who were over 65 years of age and those with household members on Medicare were significantly more likely to rate the program as “good” or “excellent” and less likely to rate it as “bad.”

Health Care in US versus Health Care in Europe

We asked people two questions concerning the American health care system in comparison to the health care systems in Europe. Specifically we asked about cost and how satisfied citizens are in the U.S. relative to European countries such as Germany or France.

QUESTION: *Compared to health care systems in nations like Germany and France, do you think that health care in the U.S costs less per person, about the same, or more per person?*

	<u>Aiken</u>
Costs less per person	14%
Costs about the same	11%
Costs more per person	51%
Don't know	<u>25%</u>
TOTAL (n)	101% (401)

QUESTION: *Who do you think is more satisfied with their health care system, Americans or Europeans in countries like Germany or France, or is there no difference?*

	<u>Aiken</u>
Americans	28%
No difference	9%
Europeans	43%
Don't know	<u>20%</u>
TOTAL (n)	100% (401)

Comparative studies show that per person cost in Europe is in fact less than in the United States and that citizens in these countries are relatively more satisfied with their health care systems than citizens here. A plurality of Aiken county residents are aware of these differences, though if we combine those who got it wrong or said they did not know or saw no difference, most were not aware.

Answers to these two questions were related to each other. Those who feel that cost is lower here were more likely to feel Americans are more satisfied. And those who feel that cost is higher here were more likely to feel that Europeans are more satisfied.

Answers to these questions were also related to perceptions of the status of the U.S. health care system. Those feeling that our costs are more per person and that Europeans are more satisfied were far more likely to see our system as broken. They were also more likely to support President Obama's proposals, a question to which we shall turn later.

Kinds of Health Care Insurance Coverage in Aiken County

We asked residents about the kinds of health insurance those in their household have, covering almost all types of insurance. The table below shows the breakdowns from the most frequent to the least frequent. It also includes those who say they have no insurance of any kind. The numbers do not add to 100% because different household members often have different kinds of insurance and some may have more than one kind of coverage.

<u>Type</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Employer Provided	63%
Medicare	34%
Private Policies	22%
Medicaid	19%
Veteran's Health Insurance	14%
CHIP	8%
Uninsured	4%

We found that residents most likely have health insurance through an employer. More than three fifths (63%) of Aiken County residents reported this type of coverage for someone in their household.

Medicare is the next most likely type of insurance among residents. Approximately 34% of respondents indicated that someone in their household participates in the program.

A little more than one in five residents have someone in their household with some form of private health insurance (22%). We should note that some of these private plans serve as supplemental insurance policies for those that already have other types of health insurance.

Of the residents surveyed, 19% reported a household member on Medicaid while 14% reported a member on Veteran's Health Care. Slightly under one in ten (8%) said someone in their household has health insurance through the Children's Health Insurance Program, also known as CHIP.

Only 4% of Aiken County residents were willing to indicate that they were uninsured. Those with no insurance were highly likely to evaluate the current health care system as "badly broken," with 95% of them giving this negative evaluation. However, the size of this group is much smaller than it should be according to national census data or polling data. According to the US Census Bureau, the percentage of uninsured was at 18% for citizens under 65 in 2007. National surveys typically find that this percentage is about 15%.

Satisfaction with Quality of Current Insurance

We asked residents about their satisfaction with the insurance they themselves have.

QUESTION: *How satisfied are you with the quality of whatever health insurance you currently have?*

	<u>Aiken</u>
Very Dissatisfied	6%
Moderately Dissatisfied	11%
Moderately Satisfied	46%
Very Satisfied	<u>38%</u>
TOTAL (n)	100% (376)

Among respondents who had opinions, more than four in five expressed some level of satisfaction with 38% saying they were very satisfied and 46% saying that they were moderately satisfied. Only 17% expressed some level is dissatisfaction with 6% saying they were very dissatisfied and 11% saying they were moderately dissatisfied.

Satisfaction depended on several factors, including the kinds of insurance people currently had. Those on Medicare were significantly more likely than those with other kinds of insurance (including other kinds of government coverage as well as private insurance and employer provided insurance) to express satisfaction with their coverage. Those who had experienced some problems with their insurance coverage (such as being dropped from coverage or having the insurance refuse to pay for service that a doctor recommended) were significantly less likely to express satisfaction with their current insurance.

Personal satisfaction was significantly and strongly related to the respondent's overall evaluation of the health care system. As personal satisfaction went up, citizens were more likely to evaluate the current health care system in the U.S. as "good." However, only among those who were "very satisfied" with their own insurance did the number of overall evaluations of "good" outnumber those with evaluations of "badly broken" for the nation's system. Even among those expressing moderate satisfaction with their own personal insurance, the number of overall assessments of "badly broken" outnumbered the "good" assessment by three to one. So we can conclude that while one's own personal experiences color how one sees the overall health care system in the U.S., most Aiken County residents do look beyond their own personal experiences in assessing the health care system in the U.S.

Fears and Experiences with Health Insurance

We asked a series of three questions pertaining to people's fears and experiences with health insurance. We related fears and experiences with people's perceptions towards the status of the current health care system in the nation.

QUESTION: *How worried are you that you might lose your current health insurance? Very worried, moderately worried, slightly worried, not worried at all, or do you not have health insurance?*

	<u>Aiken</u>
No Insurance	4%
Very Worried	12%
Moderately Worried	15%
Slightly Worried	30%
Not Worried	<u>38%</u>
TOTAL (n)	99% (401)

Nearly two in five residents express no worry at all. But a majority express at least some level of worry about losing insurance.

QUESTION: *Have you or a household member ever been dropped from health insurance without good reason?*

	<u>Aiken</u>
Yes	8%
No	<u>92%</u>
TOTAL (n)	100% (401)

Very few, less than one in ten, report having someone in their household being dropped from their health insurance.

QUESTION: *Has a health insurance company ever denied you or anyone in your household coverage for a procedure that the doctor thought necessary?*

	<u>Aiken</u>
Yes	11%
No	88%
Don't Know	<u>1%</u>
TOTAL (n)	100% (401)

Only a little more than one in ten has had anyone in their household experience being denied payment for a procedure that their doctor thought necessary.

QUESTION: *How would you describe the affordability of basic medical care for you and your family?*

	<u>Aiken</u>	<u>Nation (CBS: August 2008)</u>
Impossible	9%	10%
Very Difficult	16%	15%
Somewhat Difficult	43%	48%
Easy	31%	25%
Not Sure	<u>1%</u>	<u>2%</u>
TOTAL (n)	100% (400)	100%

On this last question we were able to compare answers to those in a national survey using almost identical wording. Affordability is clearly the most significant worry for most people. Both nationally and in Aiken County, the vast majority express at least some level of concern about affordability. Levels of concern in Aiken County are quite similar to those across the nation.

We combined all these questions about worries and negative experiences to create a compound measure of overall worries, concerns, and bad experiences. We found that as the level of worry/concern/bad experience went up, overall ratings for the current health care system and for the residents' own health care insurance went down. We also found a similar but weaker relationship to favoring President Obama's proposals. While those who were worried or concerned or had bad experiences were more likely to favor President Obama's proposals, the relationship was not nearly as strong. This suggests that other factors were at play in affecting respondents' evaluation of President Obama's proposals. Next we turn to specific reforms President Obama has supported and then to how respondents evaluate Obama's overall plan.

Support/Opposition to Proposals and Obama's Plan

We asked a series of questions about specific proposals. These questions and the breakdowns are shown below and where available, comparisons are made to national data.

QUESTION: *Would you favor or oppose regulations to stop insurance companies from using preexisting conditions to deny people coverage?*

	<u>Aiken</u>
Favor	63%
Oppose	29%
Not Sure	<u>8%</u>
TOTAL (n)	100% (399)

QUESTION: *Do you favor or oppose stopping insurance companies from limiting lifetime maximum benefits?*

	<u>Aiken</u>
Favor	52%
Oppose	38%
Not Sure	<u>11%</u>
TOTAL (n)	101% (399)

More than half of all county residents favor both of the above proposed regulations, both of which are generally favored by all sides in the health care debate.

QUESTION: *As long as the federal government helps pay the cost for low income people, would you favor or oppose requiring all Americans to buy health insurance?*

	<u>Aiken</u>	<u>Nation</u> <u>(ABC/Wash Post Oct 2009)</u>
Favor	46%	56%
Oppose	47%	41%
Not Sure/Don't Know	<u>7%</u>	<u>3%</u>
TOTAL (n)	100% (400)	100%

The requirement to buy health insurance is more controversial. And it is more controversial in Aiken County than nationally. Aiken County citizens are nearly evenly split on the question while nationally a majority favors the requirement. The proposal is favored by the president and by Democrats in Congress, but opposed by many Republicans.

Requiring people to have insurance is logically linked to the proposed “no denial for preexisting conditions” regulation. If people were not required to have insurance and if insurance companies could not deny people with preexisting conditions, many if not most people would not buy insurance until they were sick or injured. This self-interested individual behavior would destroy the underlying idea of insurance—pooled risk. That is, enough people must pay premiums to provide a sufficient pool of money to pay for those who are unlucky enough to need care.

Many people do not see this link or they wish to have access to insurance without paying into the pool until they need care. Looking at these two proposals together, half of those favoring “no denial of care for preexisting conditions” opposed requiring that everyone buy insurance.

QUESTION: Would you favor or oppose the government offering a public health care plan that would compete with private health insurance—it would be something like Medicare, but for people of any age who don’t like the insurance they have.

	<u>Aiken</u>	<u>Nation (CBS: Oct 2009)</u>
Favor	62%	68%
Oppose	28%	27%
Not Sure/Don’t Know	9%	5%
TOTAL (n)	100% (401)	100%

The public option has been one of the more controversial proposals generally favored by the president and most Democrats in Congress. Republicans along with more conservative Democrats in Congress have strongly opposed this proposal. Yet despite this often vocal and loud opposition from Republicans and conservatives, more than three fifths of both Aiken County residents and those across the nation favor a public option designed to compete with private plans.

We should note that this particular wording of the question which we borrowed from a national CBS survey, used the term “Medicare” to describe the public option. This probably elicits a more positive response than a wording that talks about a “government-run” plan, which would be more likely to elicit a negative response. This question has been formulated many different ways in national surveys. But regardless of the wording, most all show that a majority (usually close to 60%) favors the public option.

One might ask if these opinions are inconsistent with the opinions we examined earlier concerning preference for a more market based approach to improving health care. Indeed, those who preferred a more market based approach were slightly less likely to support the public option. But even among this group, 62% favored the public option. Among those who prefer a single-payer

system, 82% favored the public option. If those who prefer a more market based approach, which was described as “a little regulation and more competition,” were focusing on the competition aspect and saw the public option as consistent with more competition, then no real inconsistency exists. Indeed, providing competition is how President Obama has often described the public option.

Having looked at proposals for specific reforms, we now turn to how citizens evaluate what they perceive to be President Obama’s plans for health care. One problem in asking about Obama’s plans is that he has not laid out any single detailed plan. Rather, he has let Congress formulate a detailed plan, which at this writing has yet to emerge as a single plan. Obama has stated a number of principles and desires, including those in questions we just covered. We asked the following question, which is nearly identical to a question used by CNN and a number of other news organizations.

QUESTION: *From everything you have heard or read in the news so far, do you favor or oppose Barack Obama’s plan to reform health care?*

	<u>Aiken</u>	<u>Nation (CNN: Oct 2009)</u>
Favor	39%	49%
Oppose	45%	49%
Not Sure/Don’t Know	17%	2%
TOTAL (n)	100% (401)	100%

Aiken County residents are generally opposed to Obama’s plan to reform health care, though the opposition falls short of a clear majority. Citizens across the nation are rather evenly split on the question, though the split fluctuates a few percentage points in one direction or the other from week to week as events take place.

We examined the relationship between support and opposition to the specific proposals on health care that Obama supports (preexisting conditions, no lifetime maximums, mandated health insurance, and a public option) and whether or not residents favored or opposed Obama’s plan. To do this we combined all the specific proposal questions to create a compound measure of how many of these proposals a respondent favored. We found a strong and significant relationship. As the number of proposals favored went up, the support for Obama’s plan did increase.

However, even among those who favored three or four of these four proposals, more than a third opposed Obama’s plan. Clearly something else is triggering this opposition.

We looked to see how voting choice in the 2008 presidential election affected this relationship. Voting choice in the presidential election turned out to have more influence on how residents evaluate Obama’s plan than specific

proposals. A strong majority of those who reported they voted for Obama said the favored his plan regardless of how many of the specific proposals they favored or opposed. And a strong majority of those who reported that they voted for McCain said they opposed Obama’s plan regardless of how many of the specific proposals they favored or opposed. We might conclude that liking or disliking Barack Obama has more to do with how citizens evaluate his plan than the specific proposals in the plan.

Perceptions of President Obama’s Intentions and Performance

Because the health care debate has intensified since the Obama administration took office, we wanted to know how residents perceived President Obama’s intentions and his avowed efforts to work in a bipartisan manner on reform. We asked the following series of questions.

QUESTION: *Do you think that Barack Obama is planning to have the federal government completely take over health care?*

	<u>Aiken</u>	<u>Nation (CNN, fall 09)</u>
Yes	45%	53%
No	35%	42%
Don’t know	<u>20%</u>	<u>5%</u>
TOTAL (n)	100% (401)	100%

A plurality of Aiken County residents felt that Obama intends a total federal takeover of health care. Nationally an even higher proportion of citizens share this perception.

However, we must add that not all residents saw a federal takeover as a bad thing. A few of our respondents volunteered that they would be happy if this happened. Nevertheless, partisans split in the expected directions on this question, suggesting that most did see this as a bad thing. A majority of Democrats (58%) felt that the president has no plans for a federal takeover and an even stronger majority of Republicans (64%) felt that the plan is a federal takeover.

QUESTION: *Do you think Barack Obama’s health care reforms are designed to cover illegal immigrants?*

	<u>Aiken</u>
Yes	38%
No	36%
Don’t Know	<u>26%</u>
TOTAL (n)	100% (401)

One of the most controversial criticisms of Obama's plans is that he does not include strong measures to prevent illegal immigrants from obtaining benefits. This was the question that sparked off Representative Joe Wilson's inflammatory "you lie" outburst during President Obama's speech before a joint session of Congress. Aiken County residents were rather evenly split on how they perceive the president's intentions here. A slight plurality sided with Rep. Wilson.

Again, partisanship strongly colors how citizens view this question. While independents were evenly split, opposing majorities of Republicans and Democrats agreed and disagreed as to whether the president wants to cover illegal immigrants.

QUESTION: *Do you think Barack Obama's health care reforms are designed to cover abortions?*

	<u>Aiken</u>
Yes	39%
No	28%
Don't Know	<u>34%</u>
TOTAL (n)	101% (401)

Whether or not the president wants to cover abortions is similar to the picture we saw with respect to covering illegal immigrants. A plurality of residents felt that the president wants to cover abortions, but that plurality falls far short of a majority. And once again, partisanship colors these perceptions in the expected way.

QUESTION: *Do you feel that Barack Obama has been really trying to work with Republicans in Congress on health care reform?*

	<u>Aiken</u>	<u>Nation (CBS, Sept 09)</u>
Yes	53%	65%
No	38%	29%
Don't know	<u>9%</u>	<u>6%</u>
TOTAL (n)	100% (401)	100%

Aiken County opinion mirrors national opinion on this question, but with a relatively less pro-Obama flavor, as one might expect in a county that voted rather heavily against him in 2008. Nevertheless, the president convinced a majority of residents that he had attempted to work across partisan lines on health care. As we have seen in previous questions, partisanship again colors these perceptions. Nearly nine in ten Democrats saw Obama as making a bipartisan effort while nearly two thirds of Republicans saw the president as not making this effort. More than half the independents did give President Obama credit for a bipartisan effort.

We combined all these questions tapping perceptions into a compound variable of negative to positive impressions of Obama's intentions and efforts. These impressions were strongly related to support or opposition to Obama's plan. The more positive the perceptions, the more likely residents were to support President Obama's plan for health care reform.

This relationship was almost completely undermined by voting choice in the 2008 election. Almost all of those who voted for Obama attributed positive motives to his plans and saw him as bipartisan and supported his plan. And almost all those who voted against Obama saw his intentions and efforts in a negative light and opposed his plan. Feelings about Barack Obama as measured by November voting choice colored both the perceptions about his intentions and the evaluation of his plan.

Governor Sanford: Stay or Go?

Since the revelations concerning Governor Sanford's extramarital relationship with an Argentinean woman became known in mid 2009, the public and the press have debated what should be done. We asked residents about their take on what he should do and what the legislature should do.

QUESTION: *Should Governor Sanford resign?*

	<u>Aiken</u>
Yes	55%
No	34%
Don't know	<u>11%</u>
TOTAL (n)	100% (401)

Over half of all Aiken County residents (55%) expressed the belief that Governor Sanford should resign. Only a third (34%) believed that he should not resign, while the remaining 11% had mixed feelings or were not sure.

QUESTION: *If he does not resign, should the legislature use its powers to impeach and remove him on grounds of dereliction of duty and/or possible misuse of state funds involving travel?*

	<u>Aiken</u>
Remove	37%
Not Remove	57%
Don't know	<u>6%</u>
TOTAL (n)	100% (401)

When respondents were asked what the legislature should do if Sanford does not resign, a little more than a third (37%) wanted the legislature to remove

him. The majority (57%) opposed legislative action and would allow Sanford to complete the little over a year he has remaining in office.

While many Republican state legislators have been calling for Sanford's removal, one might suspect that citizen opinion would divide along partisan lines on these questions.

	<u>DEMOCRATS</u>	<u>INDEPENDENTS</u>	<u>REPUBLICANS</u>
Resign	64%	57%	50%
Not Resign	27%	26%	41%
Not Sure	<u>9%</u>	<u>18%</u>	<u>9%</u>
TOTAL	100%	101%	100%

The majority opinion that Governor Sanford should resign did in fact run along party lines, with support for Sanford's resignation being weakest among Republicans. They divided at a ratio of about 5 to 4 on whether he should resign or not. Opinion concerning Sanford's resignation was strongest among Democrats. They divided by more than 2 to 1 in favor of resignation. The opinion of Independents was slightly less in the resignation direction than Democrats, but a clear majority of independents did want the governor to resign. The most striking fact here is that even among Republicans more want him to go than to stay.

While the relationship between party identification and opinions concerning Governor Sanford's resignation is significant, we found no significant ties to gender or religious fundamentalism. If wanting resignation is a measure of anger, then women were not angrier than men. And those most likely to have conservative moral values, self-identified religious fundamentalists, were no more likely to want the governor to resign than non-fundamentalists.

County residents' views on legislative action to remove Governor Sanford also ran along partisan lines.

	<u>DEMOCRATS</u>	<u>INDEPENDENTS</u>	<u>REPUBLICANS</u>
Remove	54%	32%	26%
Not Remove	42%	58%	68%
Not Sure	<u>4%</u>	<u>10%</u>	<u>6%</u>
TOTAL	100%	101%	100%

The difference this time is that strong majorities of independents (58%) and Republicans (68%) oppose forced removal. Only a majority of Democrats want the legislature to remove the governor (56%).

As we saw on the resignation question, neither gender nor religious fundamentalism made any significant difference in support for legislative removal.

One might infer from the answers to these two questions that while the public disapproves of Governor Sanford's actions and wants him to leave office, the public also believes that the legislature should focus on issues other than the removal of a lame duck governor with only a year left in office.

However, if the reports of ethics violations that were being made public just after this survey was completed show evidence of criminal conduct, opinion may well shift in an even more negative direction for our embattled governor. One of the most important guidelines in public opinion research is that any question is a snapshot in time. Events following any survey can change opinion, sometimes dramatically.